

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application and indicating that claim 39 contains allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 26-32, 36-45, and 47-53 were pending in the referenced application. Claims 38, 39, 42-45, and 53 have been cancelled by this reply without prejudice or disclaimer. Of the remaining claims, claims 26, 47, and 50 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the aforementioned independent claims.

Claim Amendments

Independent claims have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 39 and intervening claim 38. No new matter has been added by any of the aforementioned amendments.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 26-32, 36-38, 40-45, and 47-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over DRAVES (U.S. Patent 6,349,355). Claims 38, 39, 42-45, and 53 have been cancelled by this reply. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot with respect to the cancelled claims. Further, as discussed above, independent claims 26, 47, and 50 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of cancelled dependent claim 39 and cancelled intervening

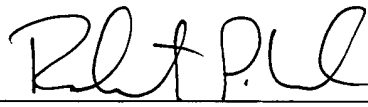
dependent claim 38. Thus, amended independent claims 26, 47, and 50 are now allowable. Further, dependent claims are also allowable for at least the same reasons as the aforementioned amended independent claims. In view of the above, the aforementioned rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03226/927001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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